

Meeting with Operations Support Unit Staff

Re:

SHD Internal Assessment and Strategic

Planning Process:

December 7, 2012, 9:00AM

I. Pre-Hearing Topic, Issues and Recommendations:

1. Issue: HWDC entry problems.
 - a) Claimants complain that notes in the HWDC do not include references to the content of earlier phone calls.
 - b) Notes that are put in HWDC need to be more professional. This record is subject to disclosure via the Public Records Act. Training may be needed.
 - c) Abbreviations should be avoided and appropriate common language used.
 - d) If there is an AR in a case, due to data entry limitations, the ARs phone number or extension must be listed in the notes.
2. Issue: Use of Bar Codes for case records.
 - a) Use of Bar Codes should be a high priority for the SHD.
3. Issue: Claimants are requesting postponements because counties have not prepared timely SOPs.
 - a) County staff indicates the delay is due to high volume of intake so they don't have sufficient time to work their caseloads.
 - b) It was pointed out that this issue has been raised as a resource issue and CWDA as a member of the SB 320 Project Team is aware of it.

II. Hearing Topic, Issues and Recommendations:

1. Issue: Nothing discussed.

III. Post-Hearing Topic, Issues and Recommendations:

1. Issue: Protocols for the release of decisions are needed.
 - a) A standard needs to be published of the number of decisions support staff are expected to release each day. The ratio of the number of decision per staff expected to be released daily has been as high as 30 to 1. Staff believes this is unreasonable. The standard needs to consider protocols and adjustments when there is a heavy volume of decisions with varying adoption dates.
 - b) If high volume release of decisions becomes the norm, management should consider use of a position specializing solely in that responsibility. This would enable that position to release a higher number of decisions because that position has no other support responsibilities.

- c) ALJs are keeping case files and not providing information about address changes and additions of ARs or changes in ARs. This creates decision release problems or delays that have resulted in penalties. ALJs need to be instructed to e-mail the changes or fax/scan a copy of the DPA 99 to support staff.
- 2. Issue: The tracking system for monthly reports is seriously outdated.
 - a) The monthly reports are not worked on by the ALJ or PJ. Support staff has to contact ALJs about potentially late cases. They should not have to do this. This is an ALJ responsibility and should be monitored by the PJ; standards and expectation should be established.
- 3. Issue: Returned Calendars.
 - a) Counties need to be instructed to put down the entire code for why a case was postponed. If the reason the case was postponed was due to the claimant's continuing conflict with the county's regular hearing days (i.e. the claimant has dialysis every week on that day), the county should inform the SHD so a special calendar day can be arranged. Otherwise, the case will be continually postponed.
 - b) If the postponement was due to the county not having its SOP ready, it seems that the claimant may not have been given the option of going forward with the hearing without the SOP. Counties should be reminded of the claimant's right.
 - c) Returned calendars need to be processed upon receipt. Delays result in cases being rescheduled late leading to penalties for late decisions.
- 4. Issue: Compliance Review of County Actions with grant decisions.
 - a) SHD reviews will continue to be done when the claimant complains about the county's action or its failure to act.

IV. Other Topic, Issues and Recommendations:

- 1. Issue: Training.
 - a) Overall training for all staff is not adequate.
 - 1) It seems that other Units receive some training about their duties but have no idea about why they do what they do and in some cases do a poor job.
 - 2) Training about how the SHD works would be very helpful.
 - 3) Software training for all staff is recommended in the use of Word for word processing and decision production. ALJs should be given follow-up training on the mechanics of decision writing and the tools available in Word.
 - 4) ALJs need training on the use of e-mail, how to use meaningful texts and/or abbreviations. The SHD should publish guidelines. Naming conventions need to be defined on how to name documents. In the absence of standard naming conventions, documents are hard to find.
 - 5) ALJs need more training, other than the law, on the roles and responsibilities of support staff and what the reasonable expectations are of those support staff. The support staff is there to assist the ALJs and work as a team, but some ALJs exhibit the expectation the support person is their personal secretary. With 8 to 1 ratios of ALJ to support,

this expectation is impossible. Training will give the ALJs a better perspective of their own roles and responsibilities. This training should include support staff as presenters and as a courtesy to support staff, ALJs need to be introduced to the support staff upon first arrival.

- 6) While focus training gets new ALJs into the field, it does not give them the breadth of training they need to be successful. For example, training or orientation given about organization structure, travel claims, use of e-mails, how to access forms, and use of equipment should be provided.
 - 7) The SHD needs to publish duty statements and update its procedural manual for staff.
2. Issue: Tele-working affects interpersonal relationships.
 - a) ALJs don't come in and use of Courier to transmit cases and documents. The SHD will continue to use home based offices as it reduces costs.
 - b) Staff recommended that when staff is hired, the newsletter should include a background sketch with picture.
 3. Issue: Should the SHD publish a functional organization chart?
 - a) Staff believes this is an excellent idea as long as it is updated regularly.
 4. Issue: Duty Judge:
 - a) Use of the Duty Judge has worked well for timely action on decision reviews, bifurcation, dismissal, expedited hearing, and postponement requests.
 - b) It was pointed out that consideration of decentralization to a northern and southern call center may marginalize the continued need for the Duty Judge.
 5. Issue: Should SHD establish northern and southern call centers?
 - a) This seems to be a higher priority for the southern region and would require staffing considerations.
 - b) Moving the queue to a southern region would be welcomed by at least San Bernardino and San Diego Counties.
 - c) Seems more staff may be needed so a BCP might be in order.
 - d) Some functions currently done by staff in Sacramento would have to be transferred. This needs to be very thoughtfully considered due to the potential impact on those staff.
 - e) All functions, procedural requirements, equipment and computer changes must be carefully evaluated (don't forget about the labels!).
 6. Issue: Equipment: Printers at some desks.
 - a) Printers at desks should be considered if frequent printing is a function of that job.
 - b) Having it would add efficiency to some jobs.
 - c) It would otherwise reduce delays.
 - d) Third desk hugs and line capacities would have to be considered, however.
 7. Issue: Grant/Denial codes need to be changed in the new IT system.
 - a) Final and Proposed decisions that are grants are coded as a 1, and denials are coded as a 2. However, the HWDC uses decision code 1 for denials and a grant is coded as 2. Staff has to review the data and make corrections for the penalty reports.

8. Issue: Should counties be allowed to input information about actions taken in the HWDC?
- a) Only some counties have this ability. Why allow any?
 - b) This is a workload problem because there is no notice to staff about the changes. Staff has to do a work-around to discover the changes. This is very time-consuming.
 - c) The status of cases is compromised, in particular WD and CWD, because cases are needlessly being reopened or new filing dates entered raising jurisdiction issues.
9. Issue: Recognition.
- a) Peer nominations could result in a popularity issue.
 - b) If peer nominations are used, there needs to be defined criteria published.
 - c) The same would be true for Supervisory or Division recognition programs.
 - d) Sometimes a simple "thank you" is enough.